

Grafham Grange School

Grafham, Guildford, Surrey, GU5 0LH

Inspection dates 19–20 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Overall effectiveness of the residential experience		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- This school makes a real difference to the lives of pupils, ensuring that all groups achieve well. Pupils make the best progress in English. They achieve well in mathematics and in their personal development.
- Good teaching enables pupils to make good progress. In the best teaching, high levels of challenge engages pupils well so that they are involved and extend their skills.
- Older pupils attain good quality accreditation by the time they leave the school in Year 11.
- Behaviour improves as pupils move through the school and attendance is rising. Pupils say they feel safe at school.
- Pupils receive good quality care and support benefiting from effective therapeutic support and guidance.
- The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools.
- Outcomes for pupils in the residence are good, preparing them well for their futures.
- The majority of parents and carers are rightly pleased with the school.
- Efficient planning by the governing body means money is spent well for the benefit of all groups of pupils, including those who are known to be eligible for additional funding.
- Ambitious leadership by the headteacher, ably supported by other senior managers, has led to good improvement since the last inspection. Leaders place a high focus on improving the performance of staff through rigorous monitoring and training.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding to enable pupils to make outstanding progress.
- Inconsistent use of the behaviour management points system by staff leads to some pupils feeling that the system is unfair.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 10 lessons, all of them jointly with the headteacher or other senior leaders. In addition, an inspector listened as some pupils read their books.
- In the residence, inspectors observed pupils' activities in the mornings and evenings and spoke with staff and pupils.
- Meetings were held in the school and in the residence, with the headteacher, senior leaders and managers, the head of care, the Head of Childrens Services, the Chief Executive of the Trust, , the Chair of the Governing Body, teachers and many pupils.
- The inspectors observed the work of the school and the residence. They looked at a number of documents, including the school's own information about pupils' progress, planning and monitoring documents, care documents, safeguarding information and pupils' work.
- The inspectors took account of the 12 comments on the online survey (Parent View). They also took account of the 17 responses from the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Denise Morris, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Liz Driver

Social Care Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Grafham Grange is a small residential special school for boys with challenging behaviour, social and emotional difficulties. Many pupils also have associated learning difficulties, predominantly because of past absences from their previous schools.
- The school has 52 places with up to 44 of these allocated for residential pupils.
- A high proportion of pupils have additional special educational needs, mainly autism spectrum disorder, attention deficit disorders or obsessive compulsive disorders.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for those known to be eligible for free school meals, those looked after by the local authority and those from service families) is higher than in most schools. There are no pupils from service families at the school.
- Most pupils are White British. A few come from other ethnic backgrounds, although no pupils speak English as an additional language.
- Pupils come from a wide area with nine different local authorities purchasing places.
- Older pupils, in Years 10, 11 and 12, have regular opportunities to attend the local Brinsbury College or other local colleges to undertake vocational training and qualifications.
- At the time of the inspection there were no pupils at the school from Years 11 and 12 as they had left following their examinations.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching so that pupils make even better progress by:
 - ensuring that planned tasks are closely matched to individual pupils' abilities and needs in every lesson
 - ensuring that every member of staff uses the behaviour points system accurately so that pupils are able to fully understand its use and know that it is fair
 - rigorously monitoring the quality of teachers' planning and checking the use of points to reward learning and behaviour on a regular basis.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The vast majority of pupils, including those with additional special educational needs, achieve well during their time at the school. As a result, the gaps between their attainment and that of their mainstream peers are closing. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is often very low but most catch up quickly and make good progress in English and mathematics from their individual starting points. Progress is often quickest in English.
- Progress in reading is good. Many pupils read widely and fluently by the time they reach Years 9 and 10. Staff place a high focus on improving the reading skills of younger pupils through daily individual 'catch-up' sessions.
- Some writing in Year 10 shows that pupils have made particularly good progress over time. This was evident, for example, as pupils wrote their own persuasive pieces based on the television programme 'Dragon's Den'. Challenging questioning about persuasive techniques had enabled pupils to understand what was expected and the topic engaged them well. Their writing was neat, well presented and informative.
- Pupils in Year 11 attain good quality accreditation. The proportion of pupils attaining five or more GCSEs has almost doubled in the past three years. By the time they leave, most pupils acquire qualifications that prepare them well for their futures including the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze award, newly introduced in the residence.
- Pupils across the school achieve well in mathematics because they enjoy the practical nature of the subject.
- Pupils have opportunities to gain work-related experiences where relevant. These opportunities play a valuable role in promoting self-esteem and confidence and giving them the skills they need when they leave school.
- Just occasionally, pupils do not achieve as well as they could because tasks are not linked fully to their abilities. At these times pupils become restless and behaviour deteriorates so that progress dips.
- Those known to be eligible for the pupil premium make up good ground so that their progress is as good as that of other pupils in English and mathematics. This is because the extra funding is used well to fund additional support for their literacy needs. All groups of pupils, including those with additional needs, and day pupils, achieve well.
- Almost all pupils acquire college places, apprenticeships or extended programmes on leaving school.

The quality of teaching is good

- All staff work hard to engage and support pupils and teaching is typically good. Relationships are positive and this does much to improve attitudes. Effective support means that lessons are usually calm. Older pupils almost always stay in class for the whole lesson, have a good work ethos and respond well. Routines in lessons are clear so that pupils know what is expected of them.
- Specialist teachers have good skills in their subjects. Outstanding teaching in a mathematics lesson, for example, enabled Year 10 pupils to find the area of circles and find the value of pi for themselves. Challenging questioning and clear demonstrations by the teacher led to their success, enabling them to also make excellent progress in their learning and behaviour.
- Effective questioning is a key feature of the most successful lessons in helping pupils to think carefully and search for knowledge. Teachers regularly expect pupils to search for information and find things out for themselves, ensuring that pupils extend their reading and writing skills well.
- Assessment has improved and pupils' work is typically well marked with helpful comments.

Homework links with the residence are developing well.

- On a very few occasions teachers do not plan varied enough tasks to meet the learning needs of pupils of different abilities well. When this happens, pupils' levels of attention, their achievement and their behaviour are not as good as they should be.
- There are some inconsistencies in the use of the reward points system by teachers which sometimes instigates disruptions.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are at the school because they have had difficulties attending mainstream schools due to their extremely challenging social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. On entry, their behaviour is often very challenging, seriously affecting their learning. Many have been out of education for long periods prior to attending this school. Records and individual case studies show that over time they settle and begin to attend class and start to learn because of high quality pastoral support.
- The vast majority of pupils behave well in and around the school, and in the residence. They have positive relationships with staff and always know that there is someone for them to talk to.
- Pupils say that bullying is quickly dealt with by staff and, as a result, they feel safe at school and in the residence. Records show that incidents are quickly dealt with.
- In discussion pupils say 'school is ok!' They show this by their rising attendance, which is now similar to that found in mainstream schools.
- Older pupils in particular, show that they have benefited well from the school's pastoral care systems and therapeutic approaches as they show mature attitudes, stay in lessons, complete their tasks and work towards their accreditation.
- Behaviour is usually managed well through a system of points. Pupils are awarded up to five points each for behaviour and learning. They like this because it brings rewards. The system is valued and usually works well. However, it has not been monitored well enough to ensure that it is consistently applied. Pupils say it is sometimes 'unfair.' This can cause disruption.
- Effective training for pupils in the management of behaviour has been provided. School documentation shows that the level of incidents has decreased rapidly over the past two years as pupils have become better at managing their behaviour.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through the daily group meeting which promotes personal responsibility. Pupils in Years 6 and 7 learn about right and wrong and regularly discuss moral issues that face communities, such as the use of nuclear power.
- The work-related opportunities for those who can benefit help pupils engage with the community and prepare them well for their futures.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has a clear vision for the school. Together with senior leaders, including from the residence, governors and the members of the Grafham Grange Trust, he has successfully improved the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. Effective action has been taken to enrich the curriculum and raise attendance in the past two years.
- There is clear evidence of the national 'Teachers' Standards' being used to help teachers improve their performance and seek promotion. Training is regular and teaching is rigorously monitored so that leaders have a very accurate view of the quality of teaching and learning. They know there is more to do to monitor the use of the pupils' reward system.
- The school is well supported by the Trust, which recognises the improvements made in the past two years and which assists leaders in monitoring performance.
- Leadership responsibilities are effectively spread and leaders at all levels are active in improving provision and the performance of staff.

- The relevant curriculum is enhanced with many additional experiences such as horse riding and a wide range of very effective therapies. This ensures that the curriculum provides something for each and every pupil that will engage them in improving their personal development and learning. Work-related opportunities both in and around the school and in the community engage pupils well.
- Relationships with parents and carers are positive and the school has links with a local college to enhance pupils' opportunities. The school has its own range of support agencies to meet the personal needs of the pupils.
- Leaders make sure that discrimination is tackled effectively. All pupils have equal opportunities, as demonstrated by the high proportion of pupils who benefit from individual support and additional experiences.
- Safeguarding procedures meet requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The Chair of the Governing Body is new to his role but he has made a good start to his responsibilities and is well supported by the Chief Executive Officer of the Trust. Together they promote a positive climate for learning in which all pupils thrive and improve. Governors are fully aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school through regular updates from leaders and through visits to the school. They know about the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement, and have a clear understanding of their role in managing the performance of the headteacher and staff. Together with the Accountable Body Trust Board they manage finances well and make sure that funds are available to reward good staff for their performance. Any underperformance is improved through support and training. Governors use the money allocated for pupils receiving premium funding well, to provide additional activities and support for the benefit of these pupils.

Outcomes for residential pupils	are good
Quality of residential provision and care	is good
Residential pupils' safety	is good
Leadership and management of the residential provision	are good

- Strong and effective leadership leads to good quality monitoring of all aspects of the residence ensuring that leaders identify and implement any necessary procedures to maintain the good welfare provision.
- Residential pupils enjoy very positive and constructive relationships with staff enabling them to make at least good, and sometimes very good, progress in all areas of their lives.
- Behaviour management is a particular strength because the staff team works hard to enable pupils to overcome difficulties with managing their own anger and communication difficulties in social situations.
- The 'Family Support Inclusion Team' has developed support for parents and carers which is highly valued. 'I find the sessions invaluable and look forward to coming with great optimism' said one parent. Another commented, 'It's nice to be in an environment where I feel confident to share my thoughts, feelings and experiences without being judged.'
- All of the parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire feel that their child's experiences in the residence enable their child to progress and develop. They all said that the leadership and management of the residence are good.
- Good quality of care for pupils has a positive impact on the quality of pupils' lives and on their future opportunities. The experiences in the residence enhance pupils' personal, social, cultural and moral educational development through after-school and evening activities such as motor-cross and visits into the local environment.
- Pupils' individual needs are met and they receive a very good standard of health provision. The

residential accommodation is good with a well-organised ongoing maintenance programme.

- The recent introduction of the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze award has been very successful with very positive outcomes for pupils.
- The safety of pupils is given a high priority and there are effective procedures for safeguarding their welfare and promoting their good health. The staff team is proactive in working with key agencies to reduce risk.
- Staff recruitment is robust and ensures that all adults are safe to work with young people.
- Behaviour in the residence is well managed with a continued decrease in the use of physical interventions. Reported incidents of bullying are dealt with immediately.
- Senior staff regularly monitor practice. The residential facility is very well managed and is effectively organised to meet pupils' individual needs. Senior residential staff regularly monitor practice. They use the information gathered to drive forward continuous improvement.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

Boarding/Residential provision		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of care and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of care that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of care it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and the quality of care has serious weaknesses.

School details

Unique reference number	125482
Social care unique reference number	SC013920
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	406313

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

The inspection of residential provision was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

Type of school	Special
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	10–17
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	40
Number of boarders on roll	21
Appropriate authority	Grafham Grange Special Educational Trust
Chair	Mike Edwards
Headteacher	Richard Johnson
Date of previous school inspection	9–10 March 2011
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